

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 19, 2007 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1-16 are currently pending in the application. However, claims 12-14 and 16 were previously withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction requirement. Claims 1, 3, 9, and 10 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-11 and 15 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Claims 1-11 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 10 were rejected because the recitation of “in the course of” lacks antecedent basis. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to replace “in the course of” with “during.” As such, Applicants submit that this rejection is rendered moot.

With respect to claim 3, the Office Action asserted that the recitation of “the same plane” lacks antecedent basis. Claim 3 has been amended to recite “a same plane” rather than “the same plane.”

In addition, the Office Action took the position that claim 3 is vague and indefinite because the term “same plane” is allegedly unclear. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that the meaning of the term “same plane” is clear and definite. Applicants

submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art would clearly understand this limitation of claim 3. In fact, claim 3 uses the term “plane” as generally understood in the English language. Specifically, the term “plane” may be considered to apply to “a surface in which if any two points are chosen a straight line joining them lies wholly in that surface,” as defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Furthermore, the specification provides that “the distance of retreat of the inner holder 60 is determined such that, after press fit is performed, the front end surface of the inner holder 60 and the front end surface of the stamper 29 are present on the same plane. In order to stop the inner holder 60 when the front end surface of the inner holder 60 and the front end surface of the stamper 29 coincide with each other on the same plane, an unillustrated stopper, which serves as a stop member, can be disposed at a predetermined position located rearward (rightward in FIG. 3) of the inner holder 60” (Specification, page 18). Thus, it is clear from the specification along with the basic meaning of the word “plane” that, according to examples of the invention, the front end surface of the inner holder 60 and the front end surface of the stamper 29 are present on the same surface in which if any two points are chosen a straight line joining them lies wholly within that surface.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that the general knowledge available to one of ordinary skill in the art, taken together with the disclosure of the invention, render the term “plane” clear and definite. Hence, Applicants request that the rejection of claim 3 be withdrawn.

In addition, the Office Action stated that claim 9 lacks antecedent basis for the recitation of “the front end surface of the inner holder” and “the front end surface of the stamper.” Claim 9 has been amended to recite “a front end surface of the inner holder” and “a front end surface of the stamper.” Accordingly, this rejection of claim 9 is rendered moot.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-7, 9-11, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Koyama (U.S. Patent No. 7,044,726). This rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the prior art rejection since Koyama does not constitute a valid prior art reference with respect to the present application. In particular, Koyama is not a valid prior art reference under §102(e). Koyama has a U.S. filing date of September 24, 2003. The present application, on the other hand, is a §371 application based on PCT/JP03/14572, which claims priority from Japanese Application JP2002-333899 filed on November 18, 2002. Therefore, the present application has an effective filing date of November 18, 2002, which is prior to the effective filing date of Koyama of September 24, 2003. Accordingly, Koyama does not constitute a valid prior art reference under §102(e). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 8 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since, as discussed above, Koyama cannot

be cited as prior art against the present application, Applicants submit that claim 8 should be allowed in its current form.

For at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit that all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed and overcome. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that all of claims 1-11 and 15 be allowed and this application passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicants' undersigned representative at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,



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